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9 February 1983

Unclassified Summary of Public Positions on INF

West German, Italian and French media have acknowledged—and dismissed—the week-long barrage of Soviet commentaries critical of the Vice President's trip. Meanwhile, an undaunted Moscow keeps hammering away at the same themes. [redacted]

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UK

The Times discussed US-UK relations in a broad context, claiming that the Vice President will find Britain a more independent-minded, "skeptical" ally as a result of the Falklands war and of the tendency of British voters to look more critically at the US leadership. The article concluded that the British will have to be persuaded of the logic of US positions on INF and will not blindly accept Washington's views. [redacted]

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West
Germany

According to the German Press Agency, Kohl told a CDU rally over the weekend that Bonn's allies hope he will remain as chancellor after the election. Kohl claimed that although his government had been in power only a short time, Western capitals "no longer doubted" West Germany's reliability as a partner. He added that the Social Democrats, in contrast, had "completely isolated" themselves. Die Welt (conservative) reported that the Vice President has described his tour of Western Europe as positive and that he has found the Alliance "vigorous, sound, strong and united, and that there is total agreement on INF." Frankfurter Allgemeine (independent) noted that "only diplomatic restraint prevented the Vice President from singling out Italy as the most faithful Ally." The mass circulation Bild Zeitung yesterday carried an interview with the head of the Allensbach Public Opinion Survey Institute, who claimed that the SPD is "gaining ground" at the expense of the Greens and that the FDP may win 5 percent of the vote on 6 March. [redacted]

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France

The socialist Le Matin pointed out yesterday that "Washington's and Paris' positions are rather close," and quoted Cheysson's praise of Bush's "open mind and talent." The conservative Le Figaro speculated that the outcome of Bush's talks in Paris would be closely watched in Moscow in light of Cheysson's trip there next week. Another conservative paper, Le Quotidien, said Bush "has been doing well in this mission, which has been described as impossible by the US press" and complimented him for being "firm" and "understanding." [redacted]

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Italy

The centrist Corriere Della Sera concluded that the zero option now "is more like a symbolic formula" to pressure the USSR. La Stampa (centrist) characterized Italy as the Vice President's least difficult stop but noted he "must have had some suspicion that the unshakable Italians may waver." The Christian Democratic paper Il Popolo highlighted the Vice President's positive response to Colombo's request for more extensive Allied consultations. L'Unita (Communist) described the US as a prisoner of uncertainty and intransigence and noted that the Vice President came to Europe to make up for Washington's lack of initiative and ideas. [redacted]

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USSR

TASS yesterday charged Washington is spreading false rumors that the US is willing to be "flexible" in the INF talks because it wants to influence the outcome of the Bundestag election in West Germany. TASS also opined that Washington's game plan is to spread such rumors until INF missiles are deployed in Western Europe. [redacted]

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